



DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

2006



The refurbished main courtroom of the Basic Court in Stip.

USAID FOSTERS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE LEGITIMATE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN MACEDONIA

- by helping local government increase its authority and become more accountable;
- by training citizens to participate in political and social decision making;
- by strengthening the independence of the judiciary and enhancing the Rule of Law; and
- by building representative and accountable government institutions.

For more information visit:
<http://macedonia.usaid.gov>

OVERVIEW

The Republic of Macedonia separated peacefully from Yugoslavia in 1991 but has not yet completed the political and economic reforms required for European integration. USAID supported Macedonia in its implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which brought the 2001 ethnic conflict to an end, by helping to enact the legal framework for decentralization; by supporting peaceful and fair parliamentary elections in 2002; and facilitate an accurate and widely accepted national census. As Macedonia moves beyond the events of 2001, USAID's democracy assistance focuses increasingly on helping Macedonia prepare for EU and NATO accession by supporting judicial reform and good governance.

PROGRAMS

DECENTRALIZATION PROJECT

USAID's Decentralization Project provides critical support to the Government of Macedonia as it implements decentralization. USAID's Decentralization Project provides "vocational" technical assistance and training for municipalities, to help them absorb new competencies, like budget management, tax administration, urban planning, and local economic development. USAID also assists municipalities to adopt internet communication and e-government technologies that facilitate citizen participation and transparent municipal administration.

ELECTIONS, PARTIES, AND PARLIAMENT

Since 2001, the Political Party Support Project provides training and consultations to help strengthen the internal democratic practices of political parties and to encourage meaningful dialogue between the leadership of the parties and their constituencies. The Project is strengthening party organizations at the local level to enhance their ability to serve as advocates of local issues and to foster increased reliance by political parties on issue-based politics and political communications. The Project is also providing party organization and communication assistance to political parties to allow them to play constructive roles between election cycles, especially at the grass-roots level, and to enhance the ability of women, youth, and marginalized groups to organize and effectively advocate issues of concern.

The Parliamentary Development Project works with both political parties and parliament to increase the accountability of elected officials to citizens; strengthen parliament's ability to represent the public; engage minority communities in the political process; ensure the integrity of the election process; and support the development of representative, open, and policy-based political parties. The Project has worked with the Macedonian National Assembly to introduce new democratic practices such as public hearings and Assembly open days. The Project helped Members of Parliament (MPs) open constituency offices creating



Electoral Board 1019 in Kumanovo counts ballots in Macedonia's 2005 local elections.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Democracy and Local Governance
Office Director
Michael Eddy
Tel: (011-389-2) 308-0446

Local address:
USAID/Macedonia
Jurij Gagarin 15/III
1000 Skopje
Republic of Macedonia

U.S. contact details:
Robert A. Sorenson
Macedonia Desk Officer
Tel: (202) 712-4632

Department of State - USAID
7120 Skopje Place
Wash. DC 20521-7120

opportunities for increased contact between citizens and their representatives. The Project also introduced an internship program through which a politically and ethnically diverse group of students served as research assistants for MPs and committees. This internship program is now fully funded and managed by the Parliament itself.

RULE OF LAW

The Macedonia Court Modernization Project is helping Macedonia's judiciary develop into a more independent, accountable, and effective branch of government. The Project works with the Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court, and other key legal institutions to strengthen the administrative capacity of the judiciary, and improve its ability to resolve legal disputes in an efficient, transparent, and timely manner. For this to be achieved, key laws including the Civil Procedure Law, the Law on Enforcement, and the Law on Courts had to be reformed—USAID helped to make this happen and is now supporting the implementation of these new Laws. Through its work in ten pilot courts, the project is implementing strategies to reduce case backlogs, increase disposition rates, and improve access to and accountability of the courts. To date, this project has reduced the backlog of year-old cases by 20% and three-year-old cases by 46%.

USAID's Rule of Law Project, which ended in April 2006, provided technical and financial assistance to long-term Roma residents of Macedonia to help them become naturalized citizens of Macedonia. USAID is continuing to follow up on applications filed through the Project to help over 1000 individuals and their families obtain citizenship. Citizenship is a critical first step toward the integration of the Roma people into Macedonian society and brings with it immediate social and economic benefits, including access to healthcare, education, and social services.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The Labor Union Project works with progressive and reform-minded unions to build a stronger labor movement in Macedonia. The Project focuses on the development of democratic and multi-ethnic labor unions that effectively advocate on behalf of workers and their rights.

The Civil Society Strengthening Project is helping to build the capacity of Macedonian non-governmental organizations to represent citizens' interests, advocate for public reform, build partnerships with Macedonian public and private sectors, and deliver needed social services where the State is absent. The Project works with a core group of 13 Leader NGOs that implement local partnership initiatives, as well as advocacy and service provision activities in a variety of fields and geographic areas. Through the support provided to the Leader NGOs, the Project aims to strengthen these organizations that can serve as mentors and resources to others, and raise the entire sector to a new level. The Project will also help these organizations achieve concrete results on issues that matter to citizens, and improve the image and public understanding of NGOs. In addition, the Project is working on introducing different models for generating resources and increasing philanthropic support, on developing volunteerism within the civil sector, and is encouraging improvements in the NGO legal framework.